A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, November 1. 1711.

IF I was at War with the Devil, suppose him in Human Shape, and he propos'd a Treaty of Cessation, I would hear what he had to say: I must confess, of all the People I meet with in the World, I least of all understand those, who speaking of the present War, without in the least descending to the Particulars to be Treated upon, crie out against the very Notion of a Treaty, *as such*; That tell us the War must be carried on without any more Treaty, and that 'tis no matter what the King of *France* proposes, we have nothing to do with him, he knows the Conditions, when he has fetch'd Home his Grandson from *Madrid*, and Demolish'd *Dunkirk, and this, they say, they must hear from other Hands than from his own too, or else they wont believe it*——Then if he sends to desire it, we may talk of Treating with him, but that no Treaty is ever to be enter'd on with the *French* King, at least not till then; but he is to be look'd upon as one that will keep no Treaty, when it is enter'd into, no, tho' it were Solemnly Ratified and Exchanged, and therefore they will hear of no more Proposals or Treaties with him; and I hear, tho' I have not yet seen them, that some Tracts are made publick upon this Foundation.

For

For my part, it is none of my Buſineſs, to enter here into a Vindication of the Honour and Veracity of the King of *France*; nor, in my Opinion, will the Characters of many Princes in the World bear ſuch a Vindication; and, I think, Honour ſeems to ſtand upon New Foundations in our Age, differing from what it did in the former days of the World; and this I muſt add, that there have been other Courts in the World, beſides the *French*, which have born the ſame Scandal, and without looking back into the Truth or Falſhood of common Fame in thoſe Caſes, we ſhall find few that are entirely free from it; but I am not for Extenuating the Crime of one Side, by Recriminating on the other; 'tis a general Defect among the Chriſtian Princes of *Europe*, and there are but few Courts in *Europe*, who have not ſome or other that charge them in this Nature: However, as this on one Hand is no excuſe for a Juſtification of the Court of *France*, ſo it is not a ſufficient Reaſon, why we ſhould not Treat with the King of *France* about a Peace, if poſſible, to put an end to this terrible War.

But a Word as we go, as to the Subject of breaking Treaties; Can we find, as I ſaid above, any State in *Europe* who are not, one Way or other, charg'd with the Breach of the publick Faith, and diſregarding the Honour of Treaties? Nay, ſo common has this Practice been, and ſo much allow'd, that the Formality of Declarations of War have been laid aſide of late Years, which in former Times was counted a piece of Honour incumbent upon every Aggreſſor; nay, among the *Turks* and *Muſcovites* it is ſo ſtill, as appear'd lately in the Pompous Magnificent Solemnity of declaring War againſt the *Turks*, by the *Czar*, in the Great Cathedral Church at *Moſcow*, and the Great Reſolution of the *Divan* at *Conſtantinople*, on the ſame Caſe.

But among the more Inhuman Chriſtians, it ſeems, it is quite otherwiſe! How do the *Hollanders* to this Day Reproach *England* with their Attempt upon the *Smyrna Fleet*, without any War Proclaim'd? And can we ſay it is without Cauſe? How do the *Swedes* upbraid the *Poliſh* King with falling upon *Livonia*, and Attacking *Riga*, while a Solemn Peace between the Nations was in Force?

How many Complaints have we had, of the Oppreſſions of the *Hungarians* by the *Imperialiſts*, while they had all the Sacred Aſſurances of Treaties and publick Faith, inſomuch, that as was reported, the great Reaſon why they all along refus'd to comply with the Propoſals of Peace, was, as they ſaid, That they could not depend upon the Solemneſt Oaths or Engagements that were, or were to be made to them, and that they had rather Treat with the *Mahometans*, for that whatever they Covenanted with the *Turks* to have done, they were ſure ſhould be perform'd, but that the *Germans* kept no Faith with them; *I ſpeak now of former Times*——. A ſad Story if it were true, that *Turks* ſhould keep Faith and Treaties better than Chriſtians.

We ſee the King of *Sweden* making like Complaints as theſe, upon Us, the Confederates, or ſuch of the Confederates, who he ſays made themſelves Guarrantees of the Treaties of *Alt-Ranſtat*, and ſuch others, who were likewiſe Guarrantees of the Treaty of *Travendhale*; theſe they tell us, inſtead of Executing the Guarrantee, appoint an Army to prevent the *Swediſh* Troops in *Pomerania* doing themſelves Juſtice on the Breakers of that Treaty, and yet took no care to have the *Saxons* perform the Conditions of it, according to the Truſt and Duty of Guarrantees; and the other, they ſay, ſuffer'd the *Danes* to March through *Holſtein* into *Pomeren*, which they ought to have prevented with all their Forces.

As to the Breaches of Treaties in former Days, charg'd upon *Charles* V. Emperor of *Germany*, it would be tedious to reckon them up; ſome of them are to be ſeen in the Manifeſto's and Declarations, which paſs'd with exceeding Rancour, even to Scurrillity, between the King of *France* and him, in which the former call'd him Infamous, and gave him the Lye.

The

The Proteſtants upbraid him with Breach of Faith and Honour in abundance of Caſes; in their Proteſtation made at *Ausburgh*, and in the Preface to the Treaty of *Smalcalde*; and the *Landgrave* of *Heſſe-Caſſel* Reproach'd him to his Face, with breaking Faith and Capitulation with him: I have nothing to do to Enquire the Truth of every Complainer; but through that Prince's whole Life, we find it a general Complaint, That he broke his Treaties, his Faith, his Honour, and his Parole upon every Occaſion; the Famous *John Hus* and *Jerome* of *Prague* upbraided him alſo with it at the Stake, when they were put to Death with his ſafe Conduct in their Pockets.

Upon the whole, I believe it would be a very difficult Task, to draw a Ballance between the Perjuries, Breaches of Treaties, Faith, Honour, Sacred Leagues, and the like, between the Kings of *France* and the Emperors of *G———y*, to all their Neighbours, and therefore, at leaſt, the *Germans*, or thoſe in their Intereſt, ſhould not be the Men that ſhould make this Complaint, *at leaſt in this Caſe*, for I think we may bring an Old *Engliſh* Proverb into the Caſe, *Never a Barrel the better Herring*; but if any have the worſt of it, I doubt it would be the *Auſtrians* ——— Only that we have Reaſon to hope well of a Prince now at the Head of that Houſe, whoſe Character we allow to be unſpotted with any of thoſe Crimes.

This however may be a uſeful Hint to ſuch as are willing, blindfold to throw the Weight of *Europe's* Strength into the Imperial Scale, and out-Ballance the reſt, by the ſame Hand which once bid fair to devour the whole, but that by the by.

And what is the Iſſue of all theſe Things? Muſt all theſe Nations therefore never Treat, but fight on till they have deſtroy'd one another? *God forbid!* The Reſult of all is this; do by the King of *France* as you do by a Debtor whom you care not to truſt, *come to Security* —— It is Nonſenſe to ſay you cannot Truſt the *French*, and therefore you will not Treat: What! Muſt the two Nations fight then forever? Till one is deſtroy'd, or perhaps both ——— Even at laſt you muſt Treat ——— As I have ſaid in another Place, *You may Treat without a Peace*, but *you can never have a Peace without Treating* ——— Now in the Propoſals which they tell us are ſent from *France*, the King of *France* ſeems to own the Caſe, and to know, *that it is not now as formerly*; that we are not to Treat upon *Faith* and *Honour*, but that we are to Treat upon *Securities*; he does not ſeek to be Truſted by us, but as he ſays, offers *Securities* ——— We have no more to do, than but to Examin thoſe Securities, and Enquire as follows.

1. If the Thing for which Security is to be given, that it ſhall be perform'd, be Satisfactory.

2. If the Security offer'd for the Performance, be Sufficient.

But this can never be done without a Treaty; to ſay we will not Treat, is to ſay we will not be ſatisfy'd; that we will Continue and Perpetuate the War, which is a Charge, I hope wrongfully brought by ſome People, that perhaps are moſt willing to have it be ſo.

I can ſee no Harm, no Danger, no Injury to us or our Confederates, in an open, free, fair TREATY, and I wonder much, to ſee any body oppoſe it: Do we not ſee that the moſt Savage Nations in the World Treat and Capitulate, and come to Terms one with another, and if they break, they Fight and Treat, and break Treaties, and ſo round again, and *in ſhort*, ſo too Chriſtians; ſo Proteſtants, ſo every Body do, and ſo we muſt do; *but as Things go*, and at the rate publick Faith is come to in the World, is there any help for it, as I ſee.

But in our Caſe, I think there needs no Debate; you have nothing to Treat with *on Truſt*, but *on Security*; where there is Security there is no Hazard; Security puts it out of the Enemies Power to break to your hurt, and puts it in your Power to right your ſelves when you are wrong'd, or

else it is no Security; and on such Terms you may Treat with *France*, or with any body, therefore I cannot see why any body that has any wish or desire towards his Country's Safety and Peace, should be against a Treaty.

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